

Family Ties

Galatians 4:21-31

True liberty consists only in the power of doing what we ought to will, and in not being constrained to do what we ought not to will.

-Johnathan Edwards

I. The Context

II. The Contrast

III. The Consequences

Take it Deeper:

1. Paul gives us the historical context of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, and their children as the backdrop for his allegory in Galatians 4. This is one of those times when knowing the Old Testament helps us understand and rightly interpret what a New Testament author is saying. Are there parts of the bible that you are not as familiar with as you would like to be? Can you think of a time when having a broad knowledge of the bible helped your understanding of a passage, or encouraged you in your application? How can you as a small group encourage one another to a more consistent reading of ALL of God's word?

2. Abraham had been given wonderful promises by God. But not all of those promises were fulfilled quickly, or even completely during his lifetime. Do you ever find it hard to wait on the promises of God? How can we practically develop patience as we wait on God's perfect faithfulness? What are some promises that we, as a church or as individual believers, wait for? Spend some time giving thanks for those precious promises made to us!

3. In Galatians 4:29, Paul says that the child born of the flesh persecuted the child born of the Spirit, and that the same thing continues to happen. Why is there animosity between those living by the flesh and those living by the Spirit? Have you experienced this hostility in your life? What does Jesus say about this tension in places like Matthew 10? How are we to respond when these pressures and persecutions do happen?

4. Another reality is that we might not be persecuted at all for our faith. To some degree, this is a result of the culture that we live in. But to a large degree, the reality is that when we live according to our flesh, there isn't really a distinction between us and the world we live in. Are there ways that we fail to be different? Are there areas where you struggle with conforming to the culture around you? How can we be praying for and encouraging one another when it comes to living as salt and light in a dark world?

For Families

5. Paul continues a point made by both John the Baptist and Jesus in the gospel narratives- your physical lineage is not enough to save you. Being a physical descendant of Abraham was not enough to ensure a right relationship with God. Talk to your kids about how their faith must be their own. It is wonderful to worship as a family. It is a blessing to be raised in a Christian home. But what will it look like for them to walk in the faith, and to follow Christ and what he has called them to do with THEIR lives?